



Testimony regarding HB 5037

Testimony by Georgia Goldburn

Director, Hope Child Development Center

Appropriation Committee

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Representative Walker, Senator Osten and members of the Appropriation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Georgia Goldburn, and I live in Middletown. I have been the director of Hope For New Haven for 16 years. Hope For New Haven is a faith-based nonprofit located in New Haven, CT and manages the Hope Child Development Center, a licensed 77-capacity facility serving children 6 weeks to 13 years old. I am also the co-founder of CERCLE, a network of over 40 childcare providers serving children and families of color, for whom Hope serves as the fiscal sponsor.

I am testifying against Governor Lamont's proposed Office of Early Childhood budget, and to voice my anger and deep disappointment that the Governor's Office of Early Childhood budget is doing nothing to address the current financial crisis in the child care industry, which is a direct result of years of underinvestment that has left the industry unable to compete to attract staff.

Representative Walker, Senator Osten and committee members, after the state went into a lockdown in March 2020, I approached my staff and laid out their options. I told them that the best scenario for them was to go home and collect unemployment benefits, which would be substantially more than their current income. My staff's response is surprising even today. They resoundingly voted to come to work to support the families who were essential workers and needed childcare. Even though they were scared and did not understand this disease that was ravaging the world, they understood the needs of the children and families. And they showed up for them along with all of CERCLE's providers, who are primarily women of color.

Representative Walker, Senator Osten, I wish Governor Lamont's budget reflected a modicum of appreciation for the extraordinary act of courage and love the childcare providers gave to the children and families of the state. I wished the Governor's message to the childcare providers, many of whom do not have health insurance, was thank you for risking your lives for ours. I wish Governor Lamont's budget proposal did not send a resounding message that our work is not valued and our lives do not matter. But my wish will remain just that, a wish, and in light of this, I come to this committee with this urgent plea to not leave these providers, who have given so much, to die on the vine. And my wish is that you, unlike the Governor, will show up for us now, in our time of need because before the pandemic the child care business model was not working and without action by this state, my fear is that childcare will not only be left in tatters, but will displace the many women of color that has been the backbone of this industry.



Many early childhood programs remained open during the early pandemic, we were there for the essential workers, we were there to support the health care workers, we took in school age children. Now we are at a breaking point. The child care industry is crumbling around us, we can't pay our staff appropriate wages and benefits, centers are closing classrooms and many providers are on the verge of closing for good.

We support children's growth, the ability of parents to work, and the overall economic well being of the state. Without available and affordable child care, we will not have a strong economy.

We need you to value children, families, and the early care industry that is there to support them!

We need substantial state investment before it is too late! Thank you for considering these issues.